

Central Valley and Foothills Bird Highlights: August through November 2019

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The waterfowl highlight was Yolo County's first **Brant** found on 6-7 November at the Woodland WTP (TEa). A **Surf Scoter** visited the Pelican Rd flood plain in Stanislaus County on 4-12 November (EHp). A rare inland immature **Brown Pelican** visited the Kern Water Bank near Buttonwillow in Kern County on 9-20 August (JCS), and another was at a lake in Manteca, San Joaquin County on 10 August (TR).

Yolo County's second documented **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** appeared one year after the first, but this time at the Woodland WTP on 28 September to 3 October (SHo+). Another photographed in Colusa County at the Sycamore Cutoff on 17 October (KS) and reported on eBird weeks later was the first county record and only the fifth found in the Central Valley. A late **Ruff** was at the Yolo County Landfill pond on 21 November (SCH). A rare inland **Ruddy Turnstone** greeted birders at the Modesto WTP in Stanislaus County on 8 September (HR, RB) and Fresno County's second surprised birders at the Fresno WTP on 15 August (GW, RSx). A third was at the Woodland WTP in Yolo County on 6-8 September (EI+). Madera County's first **Red Knot** photographed on 4 September (NO) at the Madera WTP continued thru 10 September (GW+) and another was at the Fresno WTP on 17 September (RSx). A **Stilt Sandpiper** was at the Woodland WTP on the late dates of 13-20 October (SCH). An amazingly late **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was photographed at the Yolo Bypass WA on 31 October (TEa). This rare species normally migrates through during July to mid-September, so one this late was exceptional. The Winters WTP in Yolo County was an unusual location for two rare inland juvenile **Sanderlings** on 9-11 September (EI+). A **Red Phalarope** was with Red-necked Phalaropes at the Davis WTP in Yolo County on 25 August (OM+) and another was at the Madera WTP on 5-7 September (GW+). The typical numbers and locations of **Willet**, **Marbled Godwit**, and **Pectoral, Baird's** and **Semipalmated sandpipers** were reported.

An adult **Mew Gull** visited the beach at Black Butte Res. in Tehama County on 29 November (BED). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and **Glaucous Gulls** have become annual in late fall and winter at the Yolo County Landfill and nearby Davis WTP. The first arrivals this season were on 16 November (SCH, KD, LW). The only **Franklin's Gull** report was of a juvenile at the Woodland WTP in Yolo County on 20 September (KSw).

Tropical Kingbirds are rare but regular fall and winter vagrants on the coast, but are much rarer inland. One at Sherman Island on 23+ November was Sacramento County's second documented record (MB+). Sacramento

County also had an immature male **Vermilion Flycatcher** in Natomas on 30 October to the end of the fall period (SD). Other wintering birds were discovered at Mendota WA in Fresno County on 18 November (GF), a returning male to Dawson Lake on 26 October (SR), a returning female along the Madera Canal in Madera County on 31 October (RSx), an adult female at the Merced NWR on 29 October (RSh), and a male at 19 October at the Maxwell Cemetery in Colusa County (SA) returning for its fifth winter.

Yolo County's first documented **Pygmy Nuthatch** was photographed in West Sacramento on 21-24 November (MSy, JCS). The most remarkable land bird find was Solano County's first **Wood Thrush** along Putah Creek on 15-19 September (RM+). This is an exceptionally rare vagrant anywhere in the state and was only the second record for the Central Valley.

Vagrant eastern warblers had a good showing with a **Worm-eating** in Davis for a first Yolo County record on 27 October (ZP) through the fall period, a late **Tennessee** also in Davis on 15 November (AEjr), a **Tennessee** at Ancil Hoffman Park in Sacramento County on 28 August (DW), a third **Tennessee** at Grasslands Park in Yolo County on 27 September (MP, SCH), a **Blackpoll** at San Joaquin River NWR on 15 September (LT) for one of few Stanislaus County records, an early migrant **Black-and-white** at the Sacramento Bypass in Yolo County on 10 August (MP), a **Blackpoll** at Upper Sunrise along the American River Parkway on 17 September (KT), and a **Northern Waterthrush** along Putah Creek in Solano County on 15-16 September (EI, HC).

Babel Slough in Yolo County is a fairly reliable place to find fall migrant **Green-tailed Towhees** with one or more found nearly every "fall" in recent years including one on 31 August (KSw). Another was along Putah Creek in Solano County on 16 September (JH). A likely returning **Swamp Sparrow** on 16 November (SCH) was at the same location where one has wintered in recent years. Merced NWR hosted a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** (VN) as did Putah Creek near Winters in Solano County (MK), both on 22 September.

The observers are: Stuart Angerer, Ralph Baker, Max Brodie, Holly Coates, Suzanne Day, Bruce Deuel (BED), Konshau Doman, Todd Easterla (TEa), Andy Engilis Jr, George Folsom, Jim Gain, Steve Hampton (SCH), John Harding, Jim Holmes, Scott Hoppe (SHo), Eric Hopson (EHp), Emmett Iverson, Manfred Kusch, Oscar Moss, Roger Muskat, Valerie Neer, Nancy Overholtz, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Harold Reeve, Sharon Reeve, Terres Ronneberg, Mark Sawyer (MSy), Rick Saxton (RSx), Robert Shields RSh), John Sterling (JCS), Katie Stoner, Kirk Swenson (KSw), Kevin Thomas, Luke Tiller, Dan Williams, Lynette Williams, and Gary Woods.

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Abbreviations used: WA=State Wildlife Area, WTP=Wastewater Treatment Plant; CBRC=California Bird Records Committee; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge.